States/Union Territories are expected to appoint nodal officers to liaise with the office of the Commissioner for linguistic minorities and also coordinate with departments concerned in implementing the safeguards.

No subsidy system in solar power usage

3869. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the solar home lighting systems have since been fine-tuned to replace kerosene in rural households thereby eliminating subsidy and cross subsidy worth thousands of crores of rupees, adulteration of fuel and finally smoke and pollution in rural homes;

(b) whether the projects sponsored by UNEP and TERI in Karnataka attempt to replace subsidy in solar power systems with entrepreneurial initiative and short-term assistance;

(c) whether under this scheme vendors offer a menu of lighting devices and maintenance service backed by micro-credit progressively aligned to commercial rates; and

(d) if so, the steps to popularize this no-subsidy system in solar powe usage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR) (a) the solar home lighting systems can replace kerosene lamps anc offer better quality of light without pollution and health hazards. However in view of the present high cost, the Ministry of Non-Conventional Energy Sources is providing subsidy on solar home lighting systems.

(b) and (c) In January, 2003 UNEP had launched a three year projec in Karnataka and Kerala to offer soft loans for purchase of solar home lighting systems through some banks at 5 per cent annual interest rate, to be repaid in five years. In addition, Rs. 300 per loan were provided to the banks to partly meet the high transaction cost involved in disbursing small loans. Under this project, by January, 2005, 11,650 loans were sanctioned and in the remaining period another 11,350 systems were to be supported.

The project aimed at increasing the interest rate from initial 5% to about 9-10% during the three years period. Under this project, vendors offered solar home lighting systems with set technical specifications, warranties and five year maintenance contract to cover the period of loan. Banks worked closely with vendors to assess credit risk and process loan applications.

Under another project implemented by TERI in the Tehri-Garhwal and Dehradun Districts of Uttaranchal and Bikaner District of Rajasthan about 2,500 solar lighting systems have been installed. Initiated in 1999, the project was funded by the India-Canada Environment Facility. This project focused on developing a grass-root energy service network, comprising local NGOs, dealers and retailers etc. This networking was facilitated and coordinated by TERI, which had also focussed on capacity enhancement.

(d) The Ministry has announced a scheme to provide soft loans through Indian Renewable Energy Development Agency, at 5 per cent annual interest rate, for purchase of solar photovoltaic systems. In addition, the Ministry is also providing support to the research organizations and industry for reducing the cost of solar energy devices and systems so that subsidy can be reduced/phased out.

Workshop on 'Renewable Energy Options'

3870. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
SHRI HARISH RAWAT:
SHRI VIJAY J. DARDA:

Will the Minister of NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether India had organized a workshop on 'Renewable Energy Options' for BISTEC and ASEAN countries in December, 2004;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the follow up action taken so far in pursuance of the decisions taken in the said workshop?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF NON-CONVENTIONAL ENERGY SOURCES (SHRI VILAS MUTTEMWAR): (a) Yes, Sir. An International Training Programme on 'Renewable Energy